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ABSTRACT

The domino effect of illiteracy can be halted if students are given opportunity early in life to develop a positive attitude toward reading. Research supports the notion that reading interests lead to knowledge, which leads, in turn, to increased comprehension. Motivational ideas include using trade books and literature as collateral material in content area reading, putting a book on trial with students indicting and defending a story, broadcasting a book review on the school public address system, and providing a list of items for students to locate in a local newspaper. Several successful reading programs in schools across the country provide interesting reading materials and facilitate discussion groups and other reading activities. Reading attitudes prevalent in the home environment have great influence on the children's attitudes, but the major responsibility still rests with teachers, who must represent models of positive reading habits. (Several teaching ideas are appended.) (HTH)

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But, Teacher, I Don't Like To Read, Or How To Make Reading Alluring

A PAPER

Presented At The
New York State Reading Association
Statewide Conference
Kiamesha Lake, New York
November 8-11, 1983

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It is exciting for youngsters to
touch the momentum of learning,
on their way to what is not yet.

PRE-THOUGHTS

The main activity of a school day involves reading. And if a pupil does not enjoy reading, it is doubtful that the child will enjoy school. Further, if the child does not like school, it is doubtful that one will ever fully develop even the basic reading skills. And the cycle continues. If the student does not develop these skills, it is doubtful that one will fully succeed in life. Where will it end? Perhaps it will end with some socially retarded, illiterate adult not able to cope in an advancing, technical society.

However, this domino effect of illiteracy can be halted if the student is given an opportunity early in life to develop a positive attitude toward reading.

RELATED RESEARCH

We need to motivate our students to such an extent that it enhances their interests in reading, yet so subtly that they are not aware of this newly acquired desire to read.

Cummins and Fagin suggest that interests are an emotional involvement of likes or dislikes which are associated with attention to some object.
(DeChant, 1970).

This involvement should be related to three objectives: the child should know where she/he is and how she/he feels about reading; the teacher should know where the child is in attaining growth toward desirable interests and attitudes about reading; and an analysis should emphasize areas which the teacher may plan for experiences leading to growth in interests.
(Mazurkiewicz, 1968).

Research tends to reflect the importance of student's reading interests.

- In any group of students, there will be wide variations in the student's likes and dislikes. The teacher must ascertain what these are.
- Reading interests and life interests bear a reciprocal relationship to each other. Through reading, the child will become interested in more things.

.A teacher is a key factor in developing a youngster's reading interests.

.Through reading, children's interests in non-reading areas can be developed.

.Interests are acquired and like other acquired traits, are subject to the effects of training or teaching. They are responsive to the home and school environs and are conditioned by experience. (Dallman, 1978).

.High interest materials are intriguing, and students will study them with pleasure for a long period of time.

.Low interest materials are boring and do not command attention. (Guthrie, 1981).

.By the intermediate grades, students' interests strongly influence the determination of what to read, so ideally, stories in basal readers should reflect those interests. (Pieronek, 1980).

The overarching implication seems to suggest that interests lead to knowledge which leads, in turn, to increased comprehension. Hence, high interest materials are more easily comprehended than low interest materials by virtue of the knowledge this interest has generated!

The Allure of Reading

Let us assume that you are teaching in a self-contained or departmental classroom setting. Further, suppose that your class consists of from thirty to thirty-six students of a heterogeneous mix ethnically, racially,

and intellectually. Given such a challenge, you intend to implement a variety of motivational activities to stimulate enthusiasm and interest for reading. This challenge is to spur those before us with the incentive to seek the "why" and the "wherefore" through reading.

General ideas

.To compensate for unsavory readers and textbooks, teachers might find aid in trade books (Billing). Using literature as collateral material in content reading can enhance the content knowledge base and promote reading enjoyment.

.Have individual conferences in which students talk about favorite books with the teacher.

.Hold a mock trial: Charge a prosecutor with the task of criticizing a story, and permit the defendant to justify the story of a book of his choosing. The class renders a decision on the relative merits of the case.

.Compose a telegram, trying to give the essence of the book in 15 words. Then expand it into a 100-word "over-night" telegram.

.Write a book review for a newspaper or magazine and really submit it for possible publication.

.Draw a rebus of a short story and try it on a friend.

.Make a scrapbook suggested by information from a book.

.Broadcast a book review on your school P.A. system (Merit).

Suggested Specific Strategems

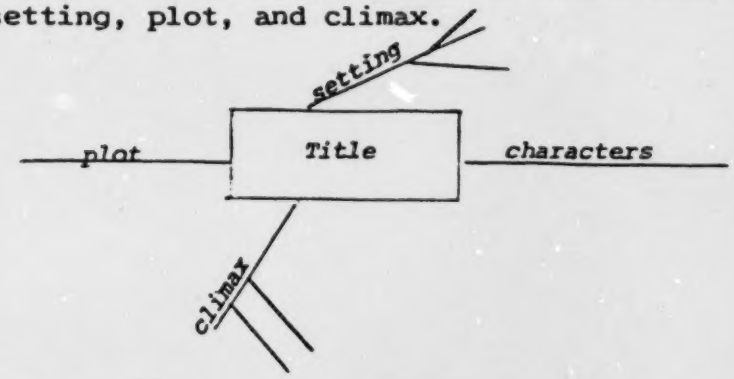
.Read a Picture - Visually read the details and supporting details of a picture. Note these by writing key descriptor words or phrases about the picture. A partner who has not seen the picture will attempt to illustrate using the descriptor words. Upon completion, compare pictures by discussion. An additional activity might include writing a story about the picture and developing comprehension questions to parallel the story.

.Newsy Notes - Provide a list of items to locate in a local newspaper. Include such newsworthy ideas as: find a good dog food; tear out an important current event; or locate an editorial dealing with professional sports.

.Foto Fun - Draw enlargements of the main characters from a story using an opaque projector. Introduce the characters individually to a friend. Tell just enough to generate an interest in reading the same story.

.The Pits - As you read your story was there any one character who made you think of yourself? 1.) What feelings will you Project to others about the story? 2.) Why did you Identify with this character? 3.) Tell a classmate about one of the most interesting sections of the story. Select a lower-grade youngster to whom you tell your story.

.Meaningful Mapping - Summarize a favorite book that you have read using the mapping method. Include such areas as characters, setting, plot, and climax.



.Grapple with Graffiti - Provide a long strip of butcher paper for the students to construct a graffiti fence. In grappling with the story you have read, illustrate its characters and their role in the story by designing the fence with free-form expression. (DiSibio, Savitz)

Profitable Programs

.Paperback Power - Simply guided free reading, Paperback Power is a program that was instituted at Arcadia High School Scottsdale, Arizona. The reading is free to the extent that students must choose from a teacher-selected list of about 470 paperbacks. After each book has been read, there is a one-on-one rap or reaction session between teacher and student. Grades are proportionate to the number of books completed and the number of classroom hours spent reading. (Larabell, 1972).

.RAP - Reading Appreciation Program - Student self-select reading materials suited to their individual needs and interests. There is a read-in held by all during the first half-hour of each school day.

> The program, instituted in 1975 in the Memorial Middle School, Medford Township School District, Medford, New Jersey was designed to foster an appreciation of literature as well as to encourage independent reading. (Purvis, 1981).

.Project GRASP - Good Readers Are Successful People. A federally funded program that began in 1982 in the New Haven, Connecticut public schools, GRASPS presented numerous activities and ideas to parents to aid them in bringing more reading into their homes. (Criscuolo, 1982).

Post-Thoughts

Teaching youngsters to read is a difficult task. But teaching them to enjoy reading can be even more difficult. The prevailing attitudes about reading in the home environment have great influence on the children's attitudes. The major responsibility, however, rests with the people who interact with the children eight hours a day, five days a week, nine months a year - - the teachers. Teachers should represent models of positive reading habits. Teachers should be able to supply students with interesting material that will arouse reading curiosity. And teachers should encourage both content reading and leisure reading at all times.

The weight of this responsibility is heavy because of the value placed on reading in comtemporary society. But, if through the efforts and exasperations of teachers, students develop healthy attitudes about reading, the bearing of this weight becomes worthwhile.

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A SPRINGBOARD OF IDEAS

General ideas

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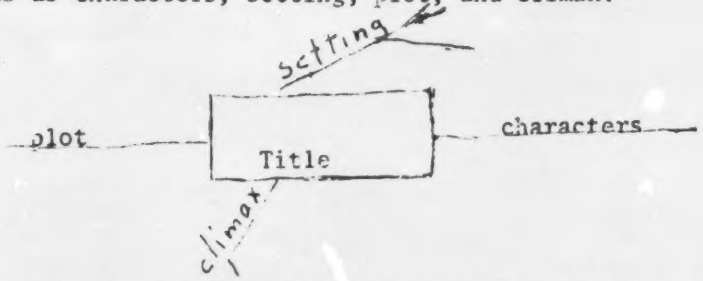

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NAME_____ DATE_____

FIND A BASEBALL TERM IN EACH SENTENCE, AND DRAW A LINE UNDER IT. THEN WRITE A SENTENCE OF YOUR OWN BELOW USING THE TERM IN CONNECTION WITH BASEBALL.

1. She wore a diamond ring.
2. The pitcher is on the table.
3. It was foul weather.
4. A fly was caught in the honey.
5. We took a drive in the rain.
6. The Queen went to the ball.
7. The pancake batter is too thin.
8. A league is a measure of distance.
9. The bird flew out of his cage.
10. It was very cold outside
11. The buses are on strike.
12. The hill was very muddy.
13. He drew a perfect line.

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